

THE  
SHRINES OF SITAKUND  
IN THE DISTRICT OF  
CHITTAGONG IN BENGAL

BY

ADHARLAL SEN, B. A.

DEPUTY COLLECTOR OF CALCUTTA, FORMERLY OF CHITTAGONG.  
LATE SCHOLAR, PRESIDENCY COLLEGE; MEMBER OF THE  
ASIATIC SOCIETY OF BENGAL; AUTHOR OF "LALITA,  
SUNDARI," "MENAKA," "NALINI," "KUSUM KANAN,"  
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**CALCUTTA:**

**PRINTED BY J. W. THOMAS,  
BAPTIST MISSION PRESS, 24 LOWER CIRCULAR ROAD.**

TO

Charles H. Tawney, Esq., M. A.

PRINCIPAL OF THE PRESIDENCY COLLEGE;

VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE ASIATIC SOCIETY OF BENGAL; AND  
REGISTRAR OF THE CALCUTTA UNIVERSITY

WHO HAS BEEN MORE THAN A FATHER TO ME.

THESE PAGES ARE DEDICATED

*As a Token of my gratefulness, and of my  
reverence for his genius and learning.*

## PREFACE.

—•—

I visited Sitakund in 1880, during the *Siva-Chaturdasi* festival. From the notes then recorded by me, I wrote a paper on the Shrines of the place, which was read before the Asiatic Society of Bengal on the 2nd March, 1881. This paper, with some additions and alterations, is now presented before the public.

It was owing to the kindness of the late Pandit Bhairava Chandra Nyayaratna of Chittagong, that I was able to obtain copies of some of the sacred writings to which reference is made in the following pages. To my old and revered tutor, Pandit Hairis Chandra Kaviratna, of the Presidency College, my thanks are also due for his kindly going through the proof-sheets, and helping me with his suggestions.

A. S.

*Calcutta, June 15th, 1884.*

THE  
SHRINES OF SITAKUND.

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Sítakund is an outpost in the Police circle of Kumiria attached to the Sudder Subdivision of the district of Chittagong in Bengal. It is bounded on the east by the Sitakund range, on the west by the Bay of Bengal, on the north and south by the Kumiria and Merkaserai thanas respectively, the population by the last Census being 36,581 souls.

The city of the same name (lat.  $22^{\circ} 37' 55''$ ; long.  $91^{\circ} 43' 40''$ ), which is at a distance of 24 miles to the north of the Sudder Station, is not mentioned by name in the Ayeen Akbery; but it appears to have been a place of considerable importance at the time when Chittagong first came into the possession of the English. Mr. Harry Verelst, the first Chief of Chittagong, who afterwards succeeded Mr. Vansittart in the Governorship of Bengal, reported his arrival from this place on the 3rd January, 1761.\* Lord

\* Mr. Cotton's Memorandum on the Revenue History of Chittagong, page 5.

Teignmouth visited it in 1778,\* and Sir William Jones in 1786.† It was also inspected and described by Captain Pogson in 1831,‡ and Sir Joseph Hooker in 1854.§ Sitakund still continues to hold its position as a place of note in the district. It has a *moonshee* of its own, which, though still going by its name, has, however, been recently removed to an adjacent place. The trade of Sitakund is not inconsiderable, lying as it does on the Grand Trunk Road between Dacca and Chittagong, which is always fit for wheeled traffic, and being accessible within a short distance by boats throughout the year. There is not certainly a more beautiful place on earth. Nature has adorned it with all that is sublime and beautiful in creation. It is a meet residence for gods. The grand mountains, the beautiful waterfalls, the volcanic springs, the clear streams, the thick forests, and their conflagrations at night, the numberless odorous flowers, the fragrant breeze and the sweet song of birds,—these no one can forget, who has once been there.

\* Lord Teignmouth's Memoirs of Sir William Jones, Vol. II, p. 55.

† Ibid. Letter from Sir William Jones to Mr. Justice Hyde.

‡ Pogson's Narrative during a Tour to Chateegaon, p. 204. The date of Pogson's visit to Sitakund, as given by the late Dr. Oldham, quoting Corbyn, in his paper on the Thermal Springs of India edited by his son, is 1778. (Vide p. 59, Part II, Vol. XIX. Memoirs of the Geological Survey of India.) But this is not correct, as will be seen from Captain Pogson's own Narrative. It was Lord Teignmouth who visited the place in 1778.

§ Hooker's Himalayan Journals, Vol. II, p. 352.

It is, however, from a religious point of view, that the place is held in the greatest esteem. In Eastern Bengal, which is condemned by the orthodox as the Mleçcha country, not visited by the Pándavas (पाण्डवजितदेश), there is no place so renowned as Sitakund. It is one of the 51 sacred *Pithas* (पीठ),\* on which fell scattered the limbs of Satí, the consort of Siva, whose dead body was cut to pieces by the discus of Vishnu. "On Chandrasekhara in Chittagong in Eastern Bengal," says the *Adipurána*,† "there is a place of great sanctity, which

\* यहांके दक्षबाञ्जमें मैरवयम्भगेष्वरः ।  
अत्तरुपा भगवती भवानी तच देवता ॥  
इति सन्त्रचूडामणी मिवपार्वतीसंवादे  
रकपञ्चामहिम्बोन्पत्तौ पीठनिष्ठेः ।

Vide Sir Raja Radhakanta Deva's *Sabdakalpadruma*, Vol. III, p. 2150, and Vol. VII, p. 702 (supplement) 1st Edition.

चट्टेश्वामे डानिहस्तु अर्द्ध अनुभव ।  
उदानी देवता चत्तुश्चेष्वर तैत्रव ॥  
स्तारुचत्तु रायेन्द्र अन्नदामङ्गल ।  
सुक्रयारेन्द्र एव निशा पाता ।

Date of composition of *Annaddámangala*, S. 1674=1753 A. D.

देव लये क्षवि द्रुले त्रुक्त निक्तपिल ।  
सेइ शके एই गीत शारुत दृचिल ॥  
† हेवाभिलिपितं ज्ञेन्द्रं वज्रप्राक् आस्ति शैलजो ।  
अतिगुरुं भवत्युपां चहांके चम्दगेष्वरे ॥

*Adipurána*, Vide. p. 105 *Chandrasekhara Máhátmya*

by Uma Charan Mookerjea.

is the favourite and secret resort of the gods." "We have heard before," the Rishis said in the *Devipurāna*,\* "of Sitakund situate on the mount of Chandrasekhara, a spring known throughout India, which is the purifier of the three worlds". "Ayodhya, Muttra, Maya (Hurdwar), Benares, Kānchi (Conjeveram), Avanti (Ojjein), and Dwārakā—these seven places are the dispensers of salvation. In Benares, Maināka, Ekāmra-vana (Bhubanesvara), Kailās and Sumeru, Siva constantly dwells. During the Kali Yuga," says Vishnu to his consort, in the *Váráhí Tantra*,† "Chittagong is the habitation of the gods." So again Siva said in the *Linga Purana*,‡ "I shall dwell with thee,O

\* शौताकुण्ठं वृत्तं पूर्वं चैलोक्यजगपावनं ।  
चन्द्रशेषरमध्यस्थं भारताद्धासमन्वितम् ॥  
इति श्रीदेवीपुराणे चैवमाहात्मेऽपि चक्षिकारस्ये शिवरहस्या-  
कथयने श्रीश्रीचन्द्रशेषरप्राप्निरद्ग्राह्याद्याद्यादा ।

† अथोऽथा भवता माया काशी काशी अवनिका ।  
पुरी द्वारावती चैव सप्तैता मुक्तिदायिकाः ॥  
बाराणसी च मैनाक एकान्नवनमेव च ।  
कैलासरजताद्रिश्च खण्डाद्रिश्चपश्चकः ॥  
रत्नेषु रक्षरो नित्यं वसेदेवीसमन्वितः ।  
कलौ लालका सर्वेषां देवानां चहस्ते शूभ्रे ॥  
इति श्रीवाराहीतन्त्रे श्रीनारायणनारायणीसंवादे  
स्फूर्तिः पठतः ।

‡ श्रीकामाद्वि चितार्थीय वज्रस्ति चन्द्रशेषरे ।  
लया सह वसिष्ठामि सत्यं सत्यं वरानने ॥

*Linga Purana*, Vide. p. 105, Chandrasekhara Māhātmya by Uwa Charan Mookerjee.

fair-faced one, on Chandrasekhara in Bengal for the good of men." The sanctity of the shrines of Sitakund is a favourite theme with the writers of the Puranas and Tantras, and passages bearing on the subject need not be multiplied. The shrines attract pilgrims from all parts of Bengal, Behar, and Orissa, as also from the North-Western Provinces. The Siva-Chaturdasi festival, according to Dr. Hunter,\* is attended by ten to twenty thousand pilgrims. The minor gatherings, at the eclipses of the sun and moon, and at like occasions, number from two to four thousand devotees.

The leading works which treat of these shrines are (1) *Devipurána*, (2) *Váráhí Tantra*, (3) *Chinnamastá Tantra*. Passing mention of them may also be found in the following works: *Adipurana*, *Linga Purana*, *A'di Brahma Purana*, *Churámani Tantra*, *Yogini Tantra*, *Váyu Purana*, *Bhavishya Purana*, *Tantrasára*, and *Kálimáhátmya*. A passage "अमृताद्य-सन्दर्भाद्यस्त्रियोऽपर्वते" is generally referred to the *Amarakosha*. In Colebrooke's excellent edition of the Dictionary, I searched for the passage in vain, but have succeeded in tracing it to the *Mahálingesvara Tantra* in the prayer of a hundred names addressed to Siva. The exact age, in which the aforesaid Tantras and Puranas were written, cannot be ascertained. According to Dr. Monier Williams, "if the oldest known Purana is not older than the sixth or

\* *Vide* Hunter's Statistical Account of Chittagong, p. 232.

seventh century, an earlier date can scarcely be attributed to the oldest known Tantra.”\* There is no mention of Chittagong, or of the shrines of Sitakund, either in the *Rámáyana*, or in the *Mahábhárata*. According to Dr. Hunter,† there is mention in the latter epic of Trilochana, a powerful king of Tipperah, who is supposed to have been contemporary with Yudhishtíra; but I have failed to trace it, though I came across two passages which speak of the conquest of that kingdom by Sabadeva and Karna.‡ We also know that the early kings of Tipperah were staunch Sivaites, and that a portion of the expenses of the Sitakund shrines is still defrayed by the Tipperah Raj.§ Dr. Hunter|| has also informed us, that “in 1512 the Tipperah General conquered Chittagong.” But when these shrines, now so cele-

■ Dr. Monier Williams’s Indian Wisdom, page 504.

† Hunter’s Statistical Account of Hill Tipperah, page 464.

‡ चैपुरं सवारे ॥ राजानमीमितौजसम् ।

गिरायाह महावाङ्कुरसा पौरवेश्वरम् ॥ ५८॥

इति सभापर्वदि दिग्बिजयपर्वदि सहदेवदिग्बिजये

एकचिंतनमोऽध्यायः ।

सोहमं पतमस्तैव चिपुरा कोशलां तथा ।

एतान् सर्वान् विभिर्जित्य करमादाय सर्वशः ॥ ८ ॥

इति सोहमादाय कर्त्ता विश्वा महारथान् ।

इक्षिणं दाक्षिणात्येषु योधयामासु सूतजाः ॥ १० ॥

इत्यारणके पर्वदि घोषयाचापर्वदि कर्त्तव्यदिग्बिजये

चिपुरामदधिकदिग्बिजयमोऽध्यायः ।

■ Baboo Kailas Chandra Sinha’s Chronicles of Tipperah, p. 5.

|| Hunter’s Statistical Account of Hill Tipperah, p. 465.

brated, were first established, has not yet been determined. It is remarkable that they were not visited by Hwen Thsang, the Chinese traveller, nor even by the great Chaitanya who is known to have made a pilgrimage to all the known shrines of his time. There can, however, be no doubt as to their recent establishment. Most of the shrines are supposed to have become endued with merit, only in the Kali Yuga. Among the springs mentioned by Captain Pogson in 1831, is Chandur or Chandra Kund, "said to have appeared within the last four months."\* In a list of objects of antiquarian interest issued by the Government of Bengal, it is said that the temple of Sambhunath was built about 450 years ago, and that of Bárabakunda about 400 years ago, but on what evidence I cannot say.†

Sitakund (Spring of Sita) derives its name from a spring consecrated to Sita, the deified heroine of the *Rámáyana*. The spring, however, is no longer in existence. A tradition prevails, that there was at one time a dispute between the followers of Vishnu and Siva about the possession of the spring, and that the dispute was referred for arbitration to one Kali Charan Roy, a zemindar and dewan in the

\* Captain Pogson's Narrative during a Tour to Chateegaon, p. 204.

† A List of the Objects of Antiquarian Interest in the Lower Provinces of Bengal compiled at the Bengal Secretariat under the orders of the Government of India, 1879.

local Collectorate,\* who, it is said, caused the spring to be filled up to terminate the difference. According to another account, the destruction of the spring was effected by the then Mohunta of Sitakund. The present Mohunta informed me that he had made several attempts to restore the sacred place, but that, though he had dug deep all around the site indicated by the sacred books, he could find no trace of the spring. His belief was, that there had been at the place no such spring as is described in the sacred books, and he told me as a reason for this belief, that the place in question was found devoid of all trace of bitumen which was found by him in the adjacent hot springs.†

Kali Charan Roy was dewan of the Chittagong Collectorate from 1785 to 1790. He was one of the farmers with whom Mr. Godwin concluded the Settlement in 1774. On the 5th January, 1785, Mr. Crofts, who at that time was Collector of Chittagong, sold his right, title, and interest in the island of Moiscal, for Rs. 40,000 to Kali Charan Roy. The latter was succeeded in the property by his widow Prohabaty, who did not die till 1826. She had no children of her own, but adopted one Chundy Churn, who died in 1820, leaving a son, Shorut Chunder. Shorut being a minor, the estate came, on Prohabaty's death, under the Court of Wards. Shorut Chunder died recently, and the present zamindar is his son, Koilash Chunder. Vide Mr. Cotton's Memorandum in the Revenue History of Chittagong, pages 165-6, and page 223.

† When this paper was read before the Asiatic Society of Bengal, Mr. V. Ball remarked that though it may be true that there never was a hot spring in the locality mentioned, the absence of any trace of bitumen was proof of its non-existence. Vide Proceedings of the Asiatic Society of Bengal for March, 1881, page 61.

Captain Pogson described Sitakund\* as "of pure limpid water," though Bárabakunda is the only spring he actually visited. He, however, subsequently obtained information of the other springs, and sent a careful person to bring a description and some bottles of water from each. The following account quoted by Captain Pogson from a *Gazetteer* is noteworthy :† "About twenty miles to the north of Islamabad is a remarkable hot well (named Seetacoond), the surface of which may be inflamed by the application of fire. Like all other remarkable phenomena of nature, it is esteemed sacred by the Hindoos, as is likewise another hot spring near to Monghir." As will presently be seen, the spring of Sitakund is described in the *Devipurana* as hot-watered and igneous, which agrees with the above extract from the *Gazetteer*. But Sitakund is also the name of the outpost containing all the groups of springs and shrines at the locality, I think it is unsafe to conclude, that the specific spring Sitakund existed at the time when the passages above referred to were written.‡ If the

\* Captain Pogson's Narrative during a Tour to Chateegaon, p. 204.

† Ibid, page 99.

‡ The popular belief is, that the spring of Sitakund is still in existence. In his clever novel, called *Chandranath* after the god — the Chandrasckhara hill, the second edition of which appeared last year, Baboo Khettra Pal Chakravarti makes the hero visit Sitakund (p. 203) in 1266 B. S., that is, about 25 years ago. All old persons, however, who have visited the place, agree in saying that the spring has not been in existence for a much longer time. Baraba-

spring existed in 1831, at the time when Captain Pogson wrote his Narrative, it must have been destroyed in recent times. But the destruction of ■ spring, held in such an esteem by the Hindoos, would not have failed to attract the notice of the authorities. I am not aware of any official report regarding the destruction of the spring.

The following account is given in the *Devipurana*\* of the shrine, and of its destruction :

40-41.—The Rishis said : We have heard before of Sitakund, situate on the mount of Chandrasekhara, ■ spring known throughout India, which is the purifier of the three worlds. If thou hast any kindness for us, O sun of knowledge, do thou tell us of it, and thereby dispel our ignorance ; for about this people ask of us.

42-3.—The Suta replied : For the performance of kunda, and not Sitakund, is about 20 miles to the north of Chittagong.

\* कृष्ण ऊचुः ।

सौताकुण्डं श्रुतं पूर्वं चिनोकजनपावनम् ।  
चन्द्रशेखरमध्यस्थं भारताख्यातमन्वितम् ॥ ४० ॥

यदि तेऽस्मि नाथ तद्वद् ज्ञानभास्तर ।  
सौताकमज्ञानम् हरे लोके शुभ्या यदीहश्च ॥ ४१ ॥

■ ■ ■ ऊचा॒च ।

सौताक्षानविधानार्थं लोकानाम् पावनाथ वै ।  
महागुरुं महारथं नत् कुण्डलु विनिर्वितम् ॥ ४२ ॥  
बाहुवाणिविभित्तु निम्बमुख्योदकं द्विजाः ।  
आतपायितं द्रुमैः सर्वोपवनस्त्रिभम् ॥ ४३ ॥

Sita's ablution, O twice-born ones, and for the purification of men, was made that spring, the most secret and beautiful, volcanic, deep, hot-watered, surrounded by trees as by an umbrella, forming one continuous grove.

44.—In that lake bathed Sítá, born of the Earth, with her husband and brother-in-law, and devoutly offered oblations to her favourite deity.

45.—There also bathed the lions among the twice-born, as also the chiefs of sages and Munis, who have attained perfection, dwelling to the north of it.

46.—What account shall I give of this spring, the most sanctifying of all? I shall only recount its merits: listen to me, O most excellent of the twice-born.

47.—When Ráma, debarred from accession to his father's throne, had gone to the hermitage of Sarabhangá, he went, in accordance with his direction, to a city lying towards the north-east.

यत्र सौना शथिवीजा स्वामिना देवरेण वै ।

खाला तत्र श्वरे देवमिष्टं सन्ताये यन्मतः ॥ ४४ ॥

खानं चक्रुः द्विजव्याघ्रा मुनिवृत्त्वारकास्था ।

सिद्धा महर्षयः सन्ति तस्योत्तरनिवासिनः ॥ ४५ ॥

किं वक्तव्यं कुण्डलानं महापुण्यविधाशकम् ।

वद्यामि नस्य माहाकां पृष्ठुध्वं द्विजपुङ्गवाः ॥ ४६ ॥

राज्यस्थाया यदा रामः शरभद्वाशमं यथौ ।

तदुपदेशं छला तु पूर्वोत्तरपुरीमगात् ॥ ४७ ॥

48-9.—In that city he met a revered sage, versed in the knowledge of *Tirthas*, a veritable ocean of knowledge, long-armed, clad in yellow garments, and with matted hair. As soon as he met him, he reverently saluted him with a meek heart, and enquired of him, “Why dost thou, O Lord, live here alone, besmeared with ashes?”

50-51.—That sage, whose whole body was besmeared with ashes, then opening his eyes, saw Rama, the holy, the eternal, the best of men, accompanied by Sita and Lakshmana, and thus addressed him :

52.—“I have heard that thou hast taken thy birth in the line of kings, only for our liberation from the dire bonds of the world.

53-4.—“How great is thy fortune, who art followed

पश्येत् पृथ्वं महावाङ्मुखां जटामण्डलधारिषम् ।  
 पौत्रवल्पपैरौधानं तौर्ध्वं ज्ञानसामरम् ॥ ४८ ॥  
 हहु नत्वा च प्रपद्मभूषा विनयमानसः ।  
 कथमन्ति स्थितं देवमहैतं विभूतिपरम् ॥ ४९ ॥  
 ततस्तु रुद्रोल्लिला हहु रामं समातनम् ।  
 जामकौलकाशाभ्यान्तु पवित्रं पुरुषोन्मम् ॥ ५० ॥  
 अवोचते रघुवरं मुनिर्विभूतिपरः ।  
 शुतं राजन्यवंशे तु जन्मामात्रप्रतिष्ठितम् ॥ ५१ ॥  
 अस्मान् पवित्रकरणे घोरसंसारवञ्चनात् ।  
 भावज्ञानं मुक्तिं कुर्वन् खोके जन्मा प्रकाशितम् ॥ ५२ ॥  
 इयं सौता पृथिवौजा कस्मिंचिच्छिवसंचिता ।  
 सुराराध्या मुक्तकेशौ चापवर्गप्रदायिनौ ॥ ५३ ॥  
 यस्यानुगमिनो देवी तस्य भाग्यं प्रतिष्ठितम् ।  
 रमुद्रस्त्रोतरे तौरे भारतार्क्षासमन्विते ॥ ५४ ॥

by this Sita, born of the Earth, with her hair unbound, the dispenser of salvation, worshipped even by Siva.

55.—“On the north side of the Indian Sea, there is a spring bearing her name, well known throughout India, which is the purifier of the three worlds. Know her not merely thy wife. Verily she is Yoganidrā herself.

56.—“Deeds unaccomplishable by thee can easily be achieved by her; she is destined by the Fates to humiliate thy pride (to eclipse thy glory).

57-60.—“It is through my good fortune alone, O Rama, that thou hast come here with her. On the mount of Chandrasekhara, southwest of this country, was built by Siva, a spring of her name. Behold that spring, Sitakund, glowing with fire, situate on the west of Sambhunath, south of the Vayu hills, north of

सत्या नामा कुण्डमसि चिलोकजनपावनम् ।  
 अ तव मृद्धियौ राम यांगनिद्रेयसिष्टते ॥ ५५ ॥  
 तवाश्कं कर्म यहा सम्यावसौलालक्ष्म ।  
 तवाभिमाने नष्टे तु विधिनैषा नियोजिता ॥ ५६ ॥  
 भाग्यवशाद्राम उनया समुपस्थितः ।  
 प्राचीदक्षिणयोर्मधे श्रीचन्द्रशेखरे गिरौ ॥ ५७ ॥  
 तव भर्गण तन्नामा कुण्डमेकं नियोजितम् ।  
 सयम्पुपस्थिते विप्रासदायुग्मिरिदक्षिणे ॥ ५८ ॥  
 नाभिगङ्गोत्तरे चैव फलगुपस्थितः स्थितः ।  
 अोतिर्मयाधः प्रतीक्षां वाढवाग्निसमन्वितम् ॥ ५९ ॥  
 पश्येह तु महाकुण्डं सौतानामा नियोजितम् ।  
 सौता श्रीनलयुक्ता या देयन्ते सहचारिदौ ॥ ६० ॥

Nábhigangá; west of the Phalgu, below Jyotirmaya.  
That Sita is thy cheering consort."

61-3.—Thus speaking, the excellent sage fixed his eyes on them. Greatly wondering, Rama passed the night there with his wife and brother, and at dawn visited Chandrasekhara in the company of the well-wishing Muni who, on arriving there, went into the spring, and facing the sun chanted the two-lettered mantra.

64-66.—Then, leaving Rama at the place, there stepped into the spring Sita, the primitive energy, the revealer of the seat of Brahma, adored by Ananta and other gods, blue as a cloud, ever complacent, three-eyed, red-lipped and fair-haired, her form glowing with fire, adorned with eight hands, and surrounded with banner and chámara (yak-tail).

रत्युक्ता तं सुनिवरः परस्परं विलोकयेत् ।  
उपिद्वा रजनौमेकां रामचन्द्राऽतिविशृणुतः ॥ ६१ ॥  
प्रभासायाम् एव याम् भावजायासमन्वितः ।  
यदौ श्रीचन्द्रशेखरं सुनिना परमेष्टिना ॥ ६२ ॥  
गत्वा सुनिवरलच कुण्डमध्ये व्यवस्थितः ।  
ददर्याभिमुखमास्याय जपमन्तर्वह इच्छरस् ॥ ६३ ॥  
रामं विहाय सा सौता कुण्डमध्ये व्यवस्थिता ।  
नौलजीमूतसङ्काशा भुजागृष्णरित्रिभिता ॥ ६४ ॥  
केशावलम्बिनौ देवौ चरणाधरसङ्गिनौ ।  
लोचनचयसंयुक्ता घञ्चामरवेष्टिता ॥ ६५ ॥  
चनकादिभिराराध्या ब्रह्मपौत्रप्रकाशिका ।  
चादिशक्तिः सुप्रसङ्गा महावाहवरूपिणी ॥ ६६ ॥

67.—Standing on the margin, Rama saw Sita immersed in the spring. Believing the spring to have destroyed her, dear to him ■ life, he addressed these words to the Muni :

68-9.—“This spring shall remain in existence for the first four thousand years of the Kali age, and shall after that time vanish from the sight of man. Whoever out of devotion will drink the water, shall obtain the same fruit as may be got by immersion, and shall not live any longer upon earth.”

70-71.—Saying this, the foe of Rávana went to the Mani hill. Having viewed the linga and bathed in the Lavanákhiya, he gratified the sage with humble and respectful words, and then returned to Chandrasekhara.

सट्ट्यो राघवः पश्येत् सौतां कुण्डनिवासिनीं ।  
 मम प्राणहरं कुण्डं विभाष्य रघुवंशजः ॥ ६७ ॥  
 सन्माला तं मुनिवरमिदं वचनमब्रवैत् ।  
 कलेशतुःसद्व्याप्ति वर्षाणि लक्षणायतम् ॥ ६८ ॥  
 स्थितं कुण्डं गुप्तमाभीत् मानवादर्शमं भवेत् ।  
 भक्तिं हत्वा तु सौतायाः यः कश्चिद्वा जलं पिवेत् ॥ ६९ ॥  
 कुण्डकानफलं प्राप्य न पुनर्वर्तते भुवि ।  
 इत्युक्तासौ रावणारिर्मणिपर्वतमूर्द्धनि ॥ ७० ॥  
 गत्वा हृष्टा शिवलिङ्गं स्वप्नाभ्यौ निमज्जथन् ।  
 आगत्य चन्द्रशेखरं प्रसाद्य मुनिमीश्वरं ।  
 सन्नाशुक्लतयामास रामोऽपि विनाथान्वितः ॥ ७१ ॥

72.—Then Rama, delighted, started with Sita and his brother, for the banks of the Godávarí.

According to the above account, Rama, having visited the hermitage of Sarabhanga, by his direction turned towards a north-eastern city, where another sage informed him, that on the south-west of that city, there was a sacred spring of the name of his consort Sita (Sitakund), who, he was informed to his surprise, was no other than Yoganidra herself. Rama is then said to have visited this spring in the company of his wife and brother and the learned sage. Finding Sita immersed in the spring, whether she had gone to bathe without his knowledge, Rama thought she had been drowned, and cursed the spring as the destroyer of the princess. According to the malediction which, be it observed, is not to have immediate effect, the spring would cease to be visible to human eyes, at the end of four thousand years of the fourth age. The Chinnamastá Tantra is, however, ready with another explanation of the origin of the shrine and of its disappearance.\* It

सौतानादाय सखाता भिन्नाज्ञनवयोपमा ।

■ परमाङ्गादः पुनर्गेहावरीं प्रति ॥ ७२ ॥

इति देवीपुराते चैत्तानादात्मा चण्डिकालात्मे दिवरसकारात्मे  
श्रीश्रीचण्डिश्वरप्राप्तिरथादग्रीष्मायः ।

■ सौतानाभिसमं कुष्ठं पातालं कुष्ठभुजम् ॥

सौतापरीज्ञायार्थाय तत्पूर्वेऽग्निः चचार इ ।

■ अद्वाप सा सौता परीज्ञानस्तापिता ॥

relates that the spring was the scene of the ordeal by fire of Sita, that it was excavated by the hand of the great Hanumat, and that it was cursed by Sita herself as the site of her sufferings. The explanation itself is, however, less important than the manner of its narration. Sita is not described there merely as Yoganidrā herself, or the Primeval Sakti or Energy, and Rama the divine hero who would curb the pride of the Rakshasas. They — the veritable Supreme Dual, the spiritual guides of Siva and his consort who came over to the shrine to offer their oblations. The spiritual guide, according to Hindoo ideas, it is well known, is the embodiment of the Deity itself on earth. The recognition accordingly of Rama and Sita as the spiritual guides of Siva and his consort is significant. A tradition has been mentioned above, which attributes the filling up of the spring to a dispute between the Sivaites and Vishnuvites. It would therefore seem, that this second legend was probably written at a period of Vishnuvite supremacy.

युगान्तेनाचिलं सर्वं दद्यते तेज विद्धिना ।  
सौताकेपामलो यत्र कुष्ठक्षत्र विचक्षणं ॥

■ ■ ■ ■ ■ \* ।  
यदेव निर्मितं कुष्ठं परीक्षार्थं इमूर्मता ।  
कुष्ठपार्श्वचरो भूत्वा निष्ठति चनुमान् वस्त्रौ ॥  
इति विद्वमस्तातन्त्रे महाकालीसम्बादे पार्वतीमन्तररथ  
स्वानविर्द्धो वास दितीयः पट्टुः ।

However it may have been, apart from the contradictory nature of the two accounts which in itself furnishes ■ strong argument against their authenticity, both of them—internally incoherent and contradictory, as they are—have not the impress of the high authority of Valmiki, the most ancient writer on the life and deeds of Rama, and perhaps the one, who in consequence describes them with the nearest approach to truth. It is true that ■ few places in the Chittagong Division bear the name of Rama, so that it might apparently seem that the prince had something or other to do with them. There is, for instance, Ramoo, where it is said Rama commenced the Setubandha bridge, but, preferring not to enter by the postern gate the capital of Ravana (to which the bridge would have led him, had he gone that way), he turned round, and constructed a separate bridge at Ramesvara to lead him to the front gate of the metropolis of Ceylon. In the *Pāyāl Puri* (lit. the nether world), in ■ cavern in the hill of Chandranath to which reference will presently be made, ■ huge stone is pointed out ■ the cooking utensil of Sita. Similarly, ■ place or two in the adjoining districts of Noakhally and the Hill Tracts, may be mentioned as bearing the name of Rama and his wife. This reason, however, does not commend itself ■ very conclusive. For it is ■ fact that may be well established by numerous instances, that the Brahmins took delight in associating shrines

with renowned [REDACTED] in their religious history, in order to ensure and enhance their sanctity.\* Regarding Rama alone, thus we read of the Doobrajpore rocks far off in the district of Beerbhook, consisting of stones that fell off from his aerial chariot on his return from the Himalayas, when he had gone up there to fetch stones for the construction of [REDACTED] bridge to Ceylon. Adjacent places [REDACTED] shown, as where his wife Sita sat and bathed. A boulder in the neighbourhood is also pointed out, [REDACTED] having been caused by Ravana's attending a call of nature.† In the same way, Rama's advent is also claimed for the province of Orissa, (wrongly identifying it with *Kishkindhyá* mentioned in the Ramayana), where the Rajah of Cuttack up to this time wears a tail in [REDACTED] public receptions, more [REDACTED] a testimony to his descent from the monkey allies of the great hero, than by way of vindication of Mr. Darwin's theory. There are

■ "The hot springs of India have attracted the notice of many observers. In the majority of instances these remarkable outbursts of water, at a temperature considerably above that of the waters, [REDACTED] even of the atmosphere in the neighbourhood, often charged with various gases and emitting strong odours, have been endowed by the superstitions and ignorant with wondrous virtues, [REDACTED] have been supposed to be the result of [REDACTED] miraculous interposition of divine energy." Dr. Oldham on the Thermal Springs of India, page 15, Part II, Vol. XIX. Memoirs of the Geological Survey of India.

† A List of the Objects of Antiquarian Interest in the Lower Provinces of Bengal, compiled at the Bengal Secretariat under the orders of the Government of India, [REDACTED] 4-6.

several places bearing the name of King Bálí, the brother of Sugriva, who was treacherously killed by Rama; *Bálíkáti*, a river; *Bálíkánta*, also a river; *Bálisahi*, a village. There is also a festival called *Bálí Játrá*. The *Sabdakalpadruma* also mentions a hill at the place called *Kishkindhyá*.\* Against this identification—plausible as it is—is the unfortunate situation of the river Pampá (in Mysore) which Rama is said to have visited, before entering *Kishkindhyá* the kingdom of the monkeys which, it would seem, coincided nearly with the present kingdom of Mysore.

It is not improbable, therefore, that the above legends of Sitakund are another of those religio-historical forgeries so common all over India. Certain it is, that Rama's journey southwards was made through the middle of the Deccan and not through Orissa and the Coasts, much less through Chittagong and Sitakund; the following being the most important places in the hero's itinerary as described by Valmiki: the Tamasá, the Vedasrnti, the Gomati, the Ganges, Batsyadesa, Prayága, Chitrakuta, the Mandákini, Dandaka, the Godavari, Krauncha, the Pampa, Rishyamuka, Kishkindhyá, and Ceylon. There is absolutely no mention, in the great epic of Valmiki, of Rama having gone so far north-eastward as Chittagong, after having visited the hermitage of Sarabhanga.

\* किंचिक्यः पु चोडृदेश्वरपर्बतविशेषः । *Sabdakalpadruma*,  
p. 579, Vol. I.

The narrative of this visit ■ contained\* in Canto V of Book III. When Rama ■■■ about to enter the hermitage of this sage, he ■■■ with the Rishi, Indra the Dreaded Thunderer, in all the paraphernalia of his high office, who disappeared on Rama's nearer approach. Replying to Rama's question, the Muni said that the lord of heaven had been to his hermitage to escort him to heaven, but that the Muni could not comply with his request and leave the earth, before seeing Rama, to whom he offered all the merits of his long penance so that the prince by virtue of them might ascend to heaven. Rama, of course, declined the gift, and requested the sage to point out a meet place for his home. The following is his reply :

“ Sutikshna’s woodland home is near,  
A glorious saint of life austere,  
True to the path of duty ; he  
With highest bliss will prosper thee.  
Against the stream thy course must be  
Of this fair brook Mandakini,  
Whereon light rafts like blossoms glide ;  
Then to his cottage turn aside.  
There lies thy path, but, ere thou go,  
Look on me, dear one, till I throw  
Aside this mould that girds ■■■ in  
As casts the snake his withered skin.”\*

On the sage giving up the ghost, the holy men who dwelt around flocked to Rama, and solicited his protection against the Rakshasas, which he readily granted. We now come to the Seventh Canto in which Rama is then made to visit this hermitage of Sutikshna. After the exchange of proper greeting, Rama said :

“ But now O saint, I pray thee tell  
 Where I within this wood may dwell,  
 For I by Sarabhanga old  
 The son of Gotama, was told  
 That thou in every lore art wise  
 And seest all with thy loving eyes.”\*

In reply to this, the sage begged Rama to take up his abode at his hermitage. Rama passed the night there. On the following morning he asked leave of the sage, and prayed for his permission to explore the Dandaka. The sage answered as follows :

“ Go with thy brother, Rama, go,  
 Pursue thy path untouched by woe :  
 Go with thy faithful Sita, she  
 Still like ■ shadow follows thee.  
 Roam Dandak wood observing well  
 The pleasant homes where hermits dwell,  
 Pure saints whose ordered souls adhere  
 To penance rites and vows austere.”†

■ Griffith's Ramayana, Vol. III, Book III, Canto VII, Page 28.

† Griffith's Ramayana, Vol. III, Book III, Canto VIII, Page 32.

Thus it is clear, that there is no mention whatever in the *Ramayana*, of Rama having passed through Chittagong on his way downwards to the Deccan. The geographical position itself of Chittagong and of the Godavari (to the banks of which Rama in the above legend is said to have bent his way on leaving Chittagong), renders it quite improbable. The attribution of the ordeal by fire of Sita to a hotspring is not a new idea.\* The Sitakund of Monghyr is similarly credited with being the scene of the same ordeal, which, it is scarcely necessary to say, really took place at Ceylon, if the father of Aryan poetry is to be believed. The principle of human nature which led to this religious fabrication, is not, however, inexplicable. "I think it is in Macedon," reasoned Fluellen,† "where Alexander is born. I tell you captain,—if you look in the maps of the 'orld, I warrant, you sall find in the comparisons between Macedon and Monmouth, that the situations, look you, is poth like. There is a river in Macedon; and there is also moreover a river at Monmouth;

\* In p. 209, Part I, Vol. XVII of the Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, General Cunningham mentions a spring called Sitakund in Kelat, which is nine miles from Dwara, and five from Monali. In Mr. Duncan's account of the Travels in Ceylon, of a Fakcer named Prann Poory (p. 39, Vol. V of the Asiatic Researches), it is stated that "our traveller states that leaving this tank, he proceeded on to a station called Seetakund, where Rama placed his wife Seta on the occasion of his ■■■ with her ravisher Ravan."

† Shakespeare, King Henry V, Act IV, Scene VII.

it ■ called. Wye at Monmouth; put it is out of my  
prains, what ■ the name of the other river; put it is  
all one, 'tis alike as my fingers is to my fingers, and  
there is salmons in both."

It is not a little remarkable, that Sitakund, the name of a spring which, no matter whether it existed or not, now exists no longer, should (*lucus a lucendo*) give its name to the outpost, and surpass the surrounding shrines ■ fame. Perhaps during a period of temporary Vishnuvite supremacy, it may have been indiscriminately used for, and may have eventually supplanted, *Panchakrośa* which, according to the sacred books, contain all the holy shrines of the place. Like the *Panchakrośi* of Benares, it stretches over 5 kroses (or 10 miles) round the village of Sitakund, being bounded\* on the east by the Mandakini, on the west by Vyasakunda, on the south by Bārabakunda and on the north by the Champaka Forest. "This land called *Panchakrośa*," said Vishnu,† "is the cause of the holy Nirvana. Many a

■ पश्चिमे वासकुच्छ पूर्वे मन्दाकिनी खूता ।

उत्तरे चम्पकारण्डं दक्षिणे वाढवामसः ॥

• एतर्तुं चेचं सथा प्रोक्तो पश्चक्रोशं महाफलं ।

इति वाराहीतन्त्रे वारायणीनारायणसंवादे चम्पकेश्वर-

वर्णना मात्रा ॥ पठलः ।

† पश्चक्रोशमिदं प्रोक्तं शिवनिर्वाहकारणं ॥

एतस्मिन्द्वयारे सप्ति कुम्भान्यन्धानि सर्वतः ।

सुगोप्यानि प्रथमेष्व मम प्रौतिकराणि च ॥

spring is contained in it, most sacred and delightful to me." By far the most frequented of these shrines are Vyásakunda, Bárabakunda, Lavanákhya, and the temples of Chandranath and Samibhunath.

The following account is given in the *Devipurana*\* of the origin of the shrines of Chandranath and of Vyasa-kunda.

26-27.—“Do thou tell us, O chief of the Brahmins,” said the Rishis, “why Siva, forsaking Kasi and Kailas, resides here in secrecy? Why he said, ‘I shall dwell on the mount of Chandrasekbara in the Kali Yuga;’ and why thy preceptor remains there, abandoning all else?”

28-29.—“In days of yore,” the Suta replied, “seeing the three worlds animate and inanimate, pervaded by the sea of curd, and immersed in the waters of causation, the three-eyed lordly spirit created Brahmá and Vishnu for the purposes of creation.

\* वृषभ ऋचः ।

वद विश्रेन्द्र तत्तुर्बं कथं भूद्वलमागमः ।  
विहाय काशीं कैलासं कस्मात् श्रीचन्द्रभूषणः ॥ १९ ॥  
कलौ तिष्ठामि इत्युक्तं श्रीचन्द्रशेखरे नगे ।  
कथम्नो गुरुस्त्वयै चास्तेऽन्यत् सकलं त्यजन् ॥ २० ॥

स्मृत उवाच ।

पुरा दधिसलिलेन आप्नं चिभुवनं वरं ।  
कारणसलिले मध्ये ब्रह्माण्डं सच्चराचरम् ॥ २१ ॥  
हृष्टा मथाविधं सर्वं भगवान् भूतभावनः ।  
सच्छजे ब्रह्मविष्णुं च सद्यर्थं चर्यमङ्कः स्वयम् ॥ २२ ॥

30-31.—“Thus created, they, infatuated with vanity, considered themselves supreme, and genitor even of the womb from which they themselves had sprung. Even in his very presence they spoke slightly of him. Then the god, disappearing, became an image of light.

32-35.—“From the sky he then addressed the ignorant gods thus : ‘ O lotus-born, of the thirteen lingas planted in Kási and other places, I have spoken to you of twelve. Only one I have concealed from thee. During the Kali Yuga, O lotus-born, I shall dwell there with Párvatí. There is no doubt of this. Do thou follow us thither with the never-dying gods.’ Thus saying, Siva with Umá vanished from their sight, and went to that place.

भूत्वा तौ तस्य निकटेऽहमारेण विजीहितौ ।  
 छन्दवन्मौ स्तुगर्भस्त्र चट्टारो तौ वभूवतुः ॥ ३० ॥  
 अस्त्वन्मौ तस्य प्रमुखे ततः सोऽपि म हम्मते ।  
 अकर्षित्वा तदा सोऽपि क्षीरितिर्लिङ्गं तदाभवत् ॥ ३१ ॥  
 अङ्गामवन्मौ तत् तौ च उवाच गग्नस्तिः ।  
 येषु येषु च स्थानेषु भवित्वं ल्लापितं नवा ॥ ३२ ॥  
 अथोदरविभागेन काश्चादिषु ■ ■ ■ !  
 हादशं कथितं तुभ्यं लिङ्गेभ्येकं जुगोप च ॥ ३३ ॥  
 कलौ निष्ठाभि तचेव पार्वत्या आत्र संग्रहः ।  
 शूद्रं गच्छत वैष्वेव नगिष्ठेऽहम्नु तत्र च ॥ ३४ ॥  
 गमिष्यथ ततः पश्चाद्गर्हेत्सत्र पद्मजा ।  
 इत्युक्तामाचिनः शशुक्त्वानाद् ■ ■ ■ सह ॥ ३५ ॥

36-37.—Even now the linga may be seen there, called Haragauri. The sinless place remained very secret in the first three ages. For the weal of men, the bull-drawn god dwells in the Kali Yuga in that sacred place with the never-dying ones."

Having thus premised the presence in the sacred place, of Siva and his consort, of Brahmá, Vishnu, and other gods, the story then runs as follows :

38.—Once on a time Vyasa, the son of Parás'ara, the subduer of his passions, began to practise asceticism in the company of the wise residents of *Kasi* (Benares), full of beatitude, knowing the Supreme Spirit, and wearing matted hair.

39-42.—Seeing him the son of Matsyagandhá, of unknown lineage, caste, and character, seated with

अथापि हृष्णते लिङ्गे हरगौरीति संशकम् ।  
 तत् चियुमे चातिमुक्तं चासौनीर्थं चावधं ॥ ३९ ॥  
 कस्त्रौ प्रकाशकपेण लोकानाम् चिताय दै ।  
 उक्तैःसामरैःसौर्ये वसनं (?) तं हृषासनम् ॥ ४० ॥  
 एवहा वासदेवेऽपि काश्मीरेचनिवासिभिः ।  
 तत् कर्तुम् समारेभे चाराश्वर्यः परम्परः ॥ ४१ ॥  
 सहामन्दनिमयैऽन्नामण्डलभारिभिः ।  
 तपसा धौतकल्पैः ब्रह्मविद्विविवेकिभिः ॥ ४२ ॥  
 शिवज्ञानाम्बुभिः सर्वं ज्ञावितं जड़भादिकम् ।  
 हृष्णा तैसां महाप्राञ्चं नारायणमिवापरम् ॥ ४३ ॥  
 ज्ञातिश्रीकृष्णैऽन्नं तं मत्स्यमन्वादाजं शूचिं ।  
 एकासनसमाचातम् एकच्चेन-निवासिमम् ॥ ४४ ॥  
 कुलशीलं तत् मुनीभासिव तिलकम् ।  
 नियते तदा कौपी वासाय चेनवासिभिः ॥ ४५ ॥

themselves on the same seat, and dwelling in the same holy place, although he was very wise, the ornament of the sages, like unto Vishnu himself, the ire of the holy dwellers was roused against Vyasa.

43-44.—Full of jealousy, Bhrigu addressed to him the following words : “ Who art thou ? Whence dost thou come ? Whose son and of what family art thou ? Where didst thou formerly dwell ? Speak the truth.”

45-46.—Vyasa replied : “ I am the son of Parasara by Matsyagandha. I have come here to see you, and to worship the god Visvanath. I would dwell with you, O sages of good actions. Let a seat amongst you be granted to me.”

47-48.—While he was thus speaking, Vyasa was interrupted by Bhrigu with these angry and unseemly words : “ Hear, O ye Munis, the account of his

नतो भृगुपतिसन्तु प्रोवाचेष्टायुतं वचः ॥ ४३ ॥  
भृगुरवाच ।

कस्यम् कुल इहायातः कस्य स्तुतुः कुलच किम् ।  
कस्मिन्निवसतिः पूर्वं बद सत्यं वचस नः ॥ ४४ ॥  
आस उवाच ।

यराग्नरस्तोऽहम् वै मत्यग्न्योदरोऽङ्गवः ।  
युक्तान् द्रष्टुम् इहायातो विच्छनाथस्य सेवया ॥ ४५ ॥  
युक्ताभिस्तु सहावासं करोमि मुनिपङ्कवाः ।  
साधुभिः स्ततकर्मभिदीवितां स्तिरित्तमा ॥ ४६ ॥  
इत्येवं वाच्यमानस्तु वचोभिस्तु समन्वितैः ।  
निरस्तो भृगुणा वासः कामक्रोधविवर्द्धिभिः ॥ ४७ ॥  
मत्यग्न्यासुतस्तु चिश्टशु वाचः कुलोज्ञितः ।  
शृणुष्वं मुनयः सर्वे अस्य जन्मप्रकौर्मनम् ॥ ४८ ॥

birth, and thou too, the son of Matsyāgandhā, the disgrace of thy family, listen to my words.

49-53.—“While thy mother, begotten of a fish and with a fishy smell, was a ferry-woman in the Jumna, Parasara one day came to the bank of the river and entered her boat. To the Muni's sight she immediately appeared to be endowed with beauty and grace, breathing perfume, a soul-ravishing maid of sixteen. Seeing her, the Muni became full of desire. Thou art the offspring of this union, and art neither a Kunda, nor a Golaka. How canst thou presume to practise asceticism with us? Go to thy own proper place. Thou shouldst not tarry here for a moment.”

54-56.—Hearing these insulting words, Vyasa, the son of Satyavati and Parasara, being irate, thought of sacrificing himself to Siva (thus making Siva

यदा मे जननी चासौत् यमुनायां लपेत्वरौ ।  
 मौनजातात् गन्धयुता तरणौटहोता सतौ ॥ ४८ ॥  
 देवात् पराश्रसात् आगत्य यमुनातटं ।  
 आवश्य तरणौ तस्याः मुनेहर्षनतः लक्षात् ॥ ५० ॥  
 तुमध्या तुरसा साति बभूवातिमोरमा ।  
 हुगन्धा षोडशाब्दीया रूपलावण्णमंथुता ॥ ५१ ॥  
 हट्टा ता सध कामान्धो रतिमग्नः लतस्या ।  
 नचोङ्गवोऽसि सः प्राञ्छः न कुष्ठः न च गोलकः ॥ ५२ ॥  
 चोऽस्माभिस्त्वं तपः कर्तुम् श्लोसि कथमन्त च ।  
 गन्धवं नव स्खानं न खेयं लक्षमन्त च ॥ ५३ ॥  
 अुला पराश्रसुतो वचस्तदात्मनिष्टकम् ।  
 वधं शिदाय दास्यामि चेतसौदम् विभाव च ॥ ५४ ॥

guilty of his death), and said, "O vile and false Siva, holder of the trident, blue-throated, and hide-garmented, why dost thou appear Asiva or inauspicious to me? Why dost thou harass [redacted] so often? This very day I will leave this place."

57.—When he the subduer of his passions was so minded, the bull-drawn and blue-throated god made himself manifest to him the chief of the wise men, and spoke as follows :

58-60.—"Certes thou art [redacted] portion of mine, O subduer of thy passions, and learned in the cause of things. There is a seat of mine on Mount Chandrasekhara, very secret, and unattainable even by the gods. There in Chandrasekhara I will always reside in the Kali Yuga with Uma.

अहो शिवाश्रिते मे त्वं कर्मने घृतस्तुक पुनः ।  
 कथं विद्युम्बनं मे ते नौसकण्डाजिवाभ्वर ॥ ५५ ॥  
 इनो गच्छामि अथैव पासराज्ञानवस्तु ।  
 अमर्षाविद्य इत्युक्ता आसः सत्यवतीद्वतः ॥ ५६ ॥  
 हेताहृहिर्यदा गच्छुम् मनस्को परमपः ।  
 तदा दृपासनः साज्ञादभवत् तत्त्वं पूर्वतः ॥ ५७ ॥  
 उवाच तं ज्ञानिवरं नौसकण्डो [redacted] ।  
 म सन्देहो मदंशस्त्रम् इष्टु वाचं परमपः ॥ ५८ ॥  
 चेतं मेऽस्तीह मुख्यं तत् देवामामपि दुर्लभम् ।  
 महारथं महागुरुं श्रीचक्रशेखरं मुने ॥ ५९ ॥  
 देवाभिलिपिं चेतं ज्ञानिकोषेऽस्मि तत्त्वित् ।  
 सदा कलौ च ज्ञानामि उमया चन्द्रगेहरे ॥ ६० ॥

61-68.—“Know, O Sage, that Chandrasekhara surpasses all other sacred places. It is covered on all sides with branches of trees, which protect it from the sun and rain. The *kokilas* sing there with sweet voice. In the recesses of the forest dwell the sages, their looks probing the Inmost Cause of the universe; Brahmā and other gods bathe there day and night; and in the hermitages dwell the Rishis, Yakshas, Gandharvas, and Bhairavas. In that forest are trees with flowers and fruits of the six seasons. The forest itself is in one place very deep and secret, and in another place rocky, like the moon half-eclipsed. On the south-west of the forest, O subduer of thy passions, is the Sindhu (the Ocean), the King of all *tirthas*, to whose embrace the sacred

सर्वज्ञेनाधिकं विद्यि श्रीचन्द्रशेषरं सुने ।  
 सर्वतो द्रुमशालाभिश्च दितं वारितामर्तुः ॥ ६१ ॥  
 वनप्रियादिभिस्त्रियं कूजितं मधुरैः सरैः ।  
 ग्रामिभिस्त्रियं खोयते गहनामर्ते ॥ ६२ ॥  
 वन ब्रह्मादिभिस्त्रियं खाणे चक्रे चहर्निशं ।  
 ग्रामिभिस्त्रियं यद्याच भैरवास्तया ॥ ६३ ॥  
 सिद्धा महर्षयो धनं वित्यमासन् तदाश्रमे ।  
 वहस्तु-फलपुष्पादैः पादयाः सन्ति तद्दने ॥ ६४ ॥  
 उप्रकाशस्त्रियं वनं सर्वतुर्मोभनं ।  
 अन्ये नगविशेषे यत् प्रत्यासङ्गार्दचन्द्रवत् ॥ ६५ ॥  
 नस्य दक्षिणतः सिंखुसौर्यरात्रः परन्तप ।  
 यस्य संसर्ममायाता गङ्गा भागौरथी द्विज ॥ ६६ ॥  
 दिनाद्रिमेस्त्राणः तथा श्रीचन्द्रशेषरः ।  
 श्रीचन्द्रशेषरे हैः सदा लालामि चे मुने ॥ ६७ ॥

Ganga offers herself, led by Bhagiratha. As the Himalaya is dear to me, ■ is Chandrasekhara. There shall I, O Muni, dwell with the gods."

Thus instructing Vyasa, the god then made himself manifest to him in his own proper form which is described at length in the text.

74-78.—“In his own form, O Munis, he then said to Vyasa: “Go there, O most excellent of sages, subduer of thy passions, where I shall dwell with Uma. Thou shalt attain all thy desires; have no doubt about thy success. That seat of mine is the giver of health and wealth, and after death, of salvation. There also dwells the rice-giving Annapurna, delighting in rice and nectar. In this seat of perfection shall I dwell, the lord of Parvati.” Saying this to the Muni, the god disappeared.

हन्त्रीपदेशं तस्मै च स वभूव परमपः ।  
 शुद्धचक्रादिकाकुर्मद्वप्रतिमः कुण्डलोच्चलः ॥ ९८ ॥  
 \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \*  
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 इतैः रूपविशेषैङ्गु भगवानुभवा सत्त्व ।  
 वसामि तत्र इत्यकां वासाय मुनिपुड्याः ॥ ९९ ॥  
 ■■ गच्छ मुग्निश्चष्ट भस्त्रिण्ये परमप ।  
 सदाभौद्यं प्राप्यसि केत् सत्यं सिद्धिर्व संशयः ॥ १०० ॥  
 मत्केवं शिवदं स्वस्थामन्ते च मोक्षदायकम् ।  
 अग्रपूर्णा निवसति सदाहरुपधारिणौ ॥ १०१ ॥  
 वत्र च सुलभास्ते चेदग्रद्राच्चाविलासिनौ ।  
 एवमूलं सिद्धपौडे वसन्तम् (?) पार्वतौपतिम् ॥ १०२ ॥  
 इत्युक्तानां दर्शे शक्तुः मुनये ज्ञानशास्त्रिने ॥ १०३ ॥

79-81.—As Nárađa had ascended the Sríśaila hill, even so went Vyasa, the son of Satyavati, to Chandrasekhara, hearing these words of Siva. There he began to practise asceticism, his mind always concentrated in meditation, repeating the five-lettered mantra, sometimes covered with snow, sometimes near ■ fire, sometimes fasting altogether, absorbed in Pránayáma, all his thoughts devoted to the meditation on god.

82.—Pleased at seeing him so devoted, the Self-created then appeared to him. "Ask for a boon," he said, "O subduer of thy passions."

83-85.—Having heard this, Vyasa then replied with folded hands—"When the Munis residing at Kasi spoke scornfully to me, it was by thy command O Lord, that I came here. Dwell thou here, as was thy command while in Kasi. This is the dear boon that I ask of thee."

ततः सत्यवतौस्तुनः श्रुत्वा वाक्यं हरस्य तु ।  
 अयौ श्रीचन्द्रशेषरं श्रीशैले मारदो यथा ॥ ७६ ॥  
 श्रुत्वा सप्तः सुमारेभे सदा च ध्यानभानसः ।  
 हिमजालहृतः कचिद्गताश्नेष्वसमौयतः ॥ ७० ॥  
 निराहारः कदा श्रेते तद्वावभाविनामतः ।  
 प्राणायामगतः कचित् पश्चात्तरमनु जपन् ॥ ७१ ॥  
 हृष्टा तपोरत्स्त्रैव स्यमुर्दर्षमागतः ।  
 भूत्वा प्रत्यक्षमवदत् वरं गृह्ण प्ररन्तप ॥ ७२ ॥  
 नन् श्रुत्वा भगवान् व्यासः कृताञ्जलिपुटोऽब्रवौत् ।  
 गर्हितं मे यदा देव मुनिभिः काशीवासिभिः ॥ ७३ ॥  
 तवोपदेशाद् गन्धव्यमवैकेन सदा विभो ॥ ७४ ॥  
 कृतं यथोपदेशं मे काशीस्त्रेन सहायता ।

86-87.—“Do thou, O sage,” the god answered, “remain on the mount Chandrasekhara near the ocean, as the guardian deity of this holy place, and make thyself the saviour of the three worlds by planting over it all the *tirthas*, such ■ Gaya and others, that exist on the face of the earth. May all thy desires be successful.”

88-89.—With these words, the god, while yet in the presence of Vyasa, pierced the earth with his trident. Then there arose a spring full of water, with igneous brilliance in the interior, and covered with smoke.

90-93.—Delighted at this sight, Vyasa assumed the

तथा भवान् गिरिश्च देहि चैवं वरं सुहृत् ॥ ८५ ॥  
 समस्तौर्थस्वान् तौर्धातिष्ठितविप्रहः ।  
 किञ्च सिंहसनौपे च श्रीचन्द्रशेखरे मुने ॥ ८६ ॥  
 द्रवादीनौर्ह तौर्धानि याज्ञि सन्तोष भूत्वा ।  
 तान्यच लापयिता तु चैलोप्सतारणं कुरु ॥ ८७ ॥  
 सिद्धिर्भवतु तेऽभौदा रत्युक्तास्ते लपानिधिः ।  
 ■ तस्य पश्चातः शक्तः चिपूलेन विकृते ॥ ८८ ॥  
 देः । एपि कुण्डाळतिर्भूता वापरिपूर्णी वभूत् ।  
 मस्यान्मरेऽग्निना दीप्तिः क्रियते धूमवेष्टिः ॥ ८९ ॥  
 इद्वानन्दगतो ■ पश्चिमतः स्वयम् ।  
 परं ध्यानगतवास्ते छुला पाषाणविशदम् ॥ ९० ॥  
 द्विभुजमुपवीनस्ते जटामण्डलधारिणः ।  
 सर्वाम्बरपरीधानं कवौन्नैः सेवितं स्वयम् ॥ ९१ ॥  
 यस्य भाषाच्छिलमिदम् वेदमार्गस्थितं अगत् ।  
 वेदाम्ब-महासिंहं निर्मल्य ज्ञानदण्डकैः ॥ ९२ ॥  
 पुमानु स तु चैलोक्यं धर्माधर्मप्रकाशकः ॥ ९३ ॥  
 इति देवौपुरादे चैचमाहात्मे स्वयम्भुरस्तस्यने चस्तिकाम्बे  
 सप्तदशोऽध्यायः ।

form of stone, and became absorbed in meditation on its west side. Even now he may be seen there, two-handed, wearing the sacred thread, and clotted hair, clothed in deer-skin, the expositor of virtue and vice, who, churning the ocean of Vedic literature with the rod of his knowledge, for the first time explained the whole universe according to the dictum of the Vedas. Let him purify the world."

Such was the origin of the shrine of Chandranath and of Vyaskunda. As in the legend of Sitakund the spring is to vanish from human sight at the end of four thousand years of the Kali Yuga, so in this legend also the shrines are to be manifest to human eyes at the commencement of the same Yuga. In both cases, great names in history have been brought forward to father the foundation of the shrines. Rama, it is known, is the deified hero of the Ramayana. Vyasa, according to the late Mr. Sherring,\* has two or three temples dedicated to him in Benares; but he is not generally considered to be a deified hero. Nevertheless, no name is so distinguished in the whole field of Indian history as the name of this sage. To him is ascribed the compilation of the Vedas and Puranas. To him is attributed the fatherhood of the fathers of the Kauravas and the Pándavas. It is no wonder, therefore, that the sage should have been made to

■ Sherring's Sacred City of the Hindus, p. 118.

play the part that he has been made to play in the foregoing passage. This, however, is not the first time, that he has been credited with the ambition of founding ■ shrine. The *Annadámangala* relates a like attempt on his part. Expelled by Siva from Kaśi (Benares), Vyasa began to practise extremely mortifying austerities, in the hope of raising a shrine that would, in every respect, surpass the Kaśi of Siva. He had well nigh succeeded in his object, when Uma, Siva's consort, one day appeared before him in the guise of an old, deaf, and decrepit woman, and asked him what merit a man would acquire by dying at his *tirtha*. Vyasa replied that the man would obtain salvation. But still the old woman pretended not to have heard his answer, and repeated the question again and again. Vexed at this, Vyasa said that the man would become an ass, who died there. Siva's consort, then assuming her own form, said "so be it," and vanished from the place.\* The later attempt of Vyasa to found a *tirtha* in Chittagong appears to have been more successful. He not only succeeds in conciliating Siva, but also obtains from him the much-desired boon. "Do thou, O sage," the god is made to have said, "remain on

■ ଡାକିଯା କହିଲା କୋଥେ କାଥେର କୁହରେ ।  
ମର୍ଦ୍ଦତ ହଇବେ ବୁଢ଼ୀ ଏଥାନେ ସେ ଘରେ ॥  
ବୁଝିନୁ ବୁଝିନୁ ବଲି କରେ ଢାକି କାଥ ।  
ତଥାଙ୍କ ସଲିଯା ଦେବୀ କୈଲା ଅଞ୍ଚଳିନ ॥

*Annadámangala*, p. 158. This legend is based on the Kasikhanda of the Skanda Purana. •

the mount Chandrasekhara near the ocean, — the guardian deity of this holy place, and make thyself the saviour of the three worlds by planting over it all the *tirthas*, such as Gaya and others, that exist on the face of the earth. May all thy desires be successful."

The pilgrim to the shrines of Sitakund generally takes up his quarters at the lodging-houses of the *Adhikáris*, — class of Brabmins, who send out emissaries called *Pándás* to almost every district of the Lower Provinces, in order to persuade people to undertake a pilgrimage to these shrines. These *Pándás* serve as guides to the pilgrims, and, in the shape of remuneration, get from the *Adhikaris* their passage-money as well as a portion, generally the fourth part, of their eventual gain; for the *Adhikaris*, besides the rent of the lodging-houses, also receive whatever the pilgrim offers to the gods, clothes, cows, horses, palkis, silver and gold ornaments,—the *kar* or the visiting cess, which consists of eight annas only under the District Magistrate's orders, being paid to the *Mohunta* for the maintenance of the shrines. The earnings of the *Adhikaris* average Rs. 5,000, and sometimes rise to Rs. 10,000. They have now-a-days found competitors in people of other castes, who also have set up lodging-houses of their own. The most opulent *Adhikaris* are Ramahari *Adhikari*, Chandrasekhara *Adhikari*, Gopinath *Adhikari*, and Akhil Chandra *Adhikari*. Hinduism is, however, at a discount in Chittagong.

The few Brahmins that may be found there, ■ certainly not the ornaments of the learned class. Some excellent rules were framed by Mr. Kirkwood, lately Magistrate of Chittagong, for the construction and ventilation of the lodging-houses. These, together with a hospital erected near the local bazaar, have served to prevent the spread of disease which, in former days, used to originate and spread around, from the large concourse of people that assembled at the *melas*. The Adbikaris have now to take out licenses from the Magistrate to lodge pilgrims, which are refused, if their lodging-houses do not conform with the prescribed rules.

Settling himself in one of these lodging-houses, the pilgrim proceeds to bathe in the *Vyásakunda* referred to above. This is a small tank, 120 × 90 hands, full of mud and shrubs, the water being so impure that one would abhor the touch of it. I ■ informed that, small as the tank was, it was believed that no one could swim across it, or throw a stone from one side of it to the other. After bathing in the *Kunda* which, however, does not indicate any signs of being of an igneous nature as related in the legend translated above, the pilgrim makes offerings to the *Bata* (*Ficus Indica*) tree, underneath which Vyasa is said to have performed the Asvamedha sacrifice.\* This tree

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वटसमीपतः ।  
घनास्त्रेषुकरोद्विभिर्बादरायषः ॥  
इति श्रीवाराहीतन्त्रे श्रीनारायणीनारायणसंवादे  
ब्रह्मौथः पदलः ।

represents the primeval Bata tree, under which the great Vishnu rested before the creation. It serves as the veritable "door-keeper" of the god Chandranath, and is the presiding deity of the plain below.\* It is said never to grow old, and to flower in all seasons for the worship of the god. The pilgrim throws upon the tree-deity clods of earth, of which it is said to be very fond, and circumambulates it. The temple of Vyasa is pointed out, lying on the margin of the spring in a very dilapidated state.

Thence the pilgrim proceeds to the temple of *S'ambhunāth*, or *Svayambhunāth*, the Self-created Lord. As you proceed, the mount Chandrasekhara appears before you in full majesty. You feel a presence. No wonder that they said that the gods resided there. Are the Munis still meditating there on God, under the tall pine-trees? Are the gods and nymphs disporting themselves on the hillocks? All the old Hindu associations force themselves on you despite your Western education. The feeling, however, fades away, when you come to the site of the Sitakund mentioned above. According to the *Varahi Tantra*† there are five Kundas at this place called

\* अँ बटुकः अनिदस्य मन्दीश्वरेचनायकः ।

निर्विघ्नं कुरु देवेश पश्चलोऽप्रियः सदा ॥

बटुमाल्लो भज्जाट्जः ईश्वरद्वारपालकः ।

इति श्रीवाराहौतन्त्रे श्रीनारायणीनारायणसंवादे

दत्तौयः पठतः ।

† ततः पूर्वपथाष्ट्या वायुपर्वतस्त्रिधौ ।

सुमीरे विकुदेवस्य ग्रामदौशस्य परिमै ॥

*Sítakunda, Rámakunda, Lakshmanakunda, Brishakunda and Nábhkunda.* Sítakund, ■ related above, is no longer in existence. Small holes are, however, pointed out ■ the other Kundas. Near them, in an old temple are the images of Ráma, Sítá, and Lakshmana. These are stone figures, very awkwardly done, unlike the graceful idols of Calcutta.

*Jyotirmaya* consists of flickering tongues of volcanic flames in the right side of the ascent to the temple of Sambhunath. The flames, it is said, disappear altogether at the touch of the impious. When we visited *Jyotirmaya*, we found that it had been completely put out; and it was not till the Mohunta of Sitakund, who was acting as our cicerone, brought another light in contact with it, that the tongues could be lighted again. It is said that the flames move about from place to place, sometimes appearing in the temple of Sambhunath, sometimes in other places, and at times burn a whole forest.

पश्चकुण्डान्वितं ल्यानं परमं ब्रह्मदायकम् ।

दृष्टकुण्डं परं यस्य प्राम् ज्योतीश्वराकामकम् ॥

ततः ब्रह्मादयः सुराः दित्यं तिष्ठन्ति चानघे ।

पातालादुत्थिता देवी गङ्गा तत्पूर्वतः क्रमात् ॥

तज्जलं स्यर्शनादेवि सर्वपापाम् प्रकुच्यते ।

तस्योन्नरदेशस्यां भाभिकुण्डं मनोहरम् ॥

तस्योन्नरसमसूचार्यं (?) रामकुण्डं मनोहरम् ।

लक्षणस्य तथेऽदौचां सौताधाः कुण्डमुत्तमम् ॥

इति श्रीवाराहौतन्त्रे श्रीनारायणनारायणी-

सवादे चतुर्थः पठलः ।

The Mohunta told ■■■ that, on one occasion when he was coming down from the temple of Chandranath, he was overtaken and scorched by the flames which suddenly appeared in great force, on the way between him and the temple of Sambhunath. When we visited Chandrasekhara, we found that a considerable portion of the forest on both sides of our way, had been recently burnt down by the fire. Some portion or other of the range of mountains always exhibits traces of the flames. At night, we witnessed an extensive conflagration on a distant hillock. Lord Teignmouth ■■■ probably referring to Jyotirmaya, when he wrote the following: "On the side of a hill distant about three miles from the burning well (Barabakunda), there is a spot of ground, of a few feet only in dimensions, from which flashes of fire burst on stamping strongly with the foot. The appearance of this spot resembled that of earth on which a fire had been kindled. I do not recollect whether it was hot to the touch."\*

The linga *Sambhunāth*, the self-created lord, is said to form part of the body of the hill. A tradition is told that one of the kings of Tipperah made great endeavours to dig it out from the shrine, in order to carry it over to his capital, but without success. He was directed, it is added, by the god to content himself with the goddess *Tripurāsundari*, whom he accordingly took over to his kingdom.

\* Lord Teignmouth's Memoirs of Sir William Jones, Vol II. p. 50.

In the history of Tipperah written by Baboo Kailas Chandra Sinha,\* we certainly read of king Kumāra having gone to visit a linga in Syāmalanagar, which the historian considers to be identical with Chittagong. We also read of his grandson king Taksharao, who was a devout worshipper of Siva, but had failed to obtain it through the influence of the god, having wounded the god in his feet. Offended at this treatment, the god is said to have left Tipperah. But it is also related that king Taksharao then propitiated the irate god with a human sacrifice, and got two sons by his influence. It is not impossible, that this statement may have connexion with the attempt to transplant the linga Sambhunāth; but an old officer belonging to the Chittagong Collectorate informed me, that the belief that the linga formed part of the body of the mount was groundless,—it being a movable stone having artificially imprinted on it in ~~with~~ the marks of natural lingahood†—and that the temple was purposely kept dark to avoid detection. Mr. Caspersz, the Assistant Magistrate, who was deputed in 1879 to superintend the *Siva Chaturdasi mela*, proposed

\* Babu Kailas Chandra Sinha's Chronicles of Tipperah, p. 5.

† नामाच्छ्रद्धसमायुक्तं नामावर्षसमन्वितम् ।  
अदृश्यमूलं वज्रिङ्गं कर्कशं भुवि हुङ्कले ।  
विद्वन्नु खयमूलमपरं स्त्रावच्छुतम् ॥

रति सिद्धान्तेश्वरः ।

Vide p. 257 of the Prānatoshini.

to the District Magistrate the opening of an aperture in the dome, to serve as a skylight which would prevent people from looking in, ■ well ■ give light and air. The well-meant suggestion could not, I believe, be carried out, ■ it ■ necessary to avoid what might have been misunderstood as uncalled for interference on the part of Government. The temple of Sambhunáth was erected down below in the plateau of the hill, ■ the ascent to that of Chandranath is not practicable throughout the year, especially in the rainy season which is somewhat long in that part of the country, owing to its being hilly. It consists of two apartments. In the outer apartment are the Bhairava, Rama, Sita, Lakshmana, Hanumat, Annapurná and others. The presiding deity is in the inner apartment, and is of course, very superior. “The sight of the face of Kramadísa (another name of Sambhunáth) saves one from future birth.”\* The linga is of ■ cylindrical form, about four inches in diameter, and rising about five inches from a cone, the base of which has been walled around.

In the court-yard of the main temple of Sambhunáth are many minor shrines crumbling to decay. There is a temple of Kúli, the dread consort of

■ शमदौशसुखं हहु पुनर्जन्मा न किञ्चते ।  
 इति श्रीवाराहौतन्त्रे नारायणौनारायणसंबादे  
 सन्दर्भेवर्णना बास वष्टः पठलः ।

Siva; a mandir of *Jagannáth*, and *Rádhá Krishna*; and mount *Govardhana* ■ well known in Brindávana. Close by are the eight Bhairavas, and the burial places of some of the Mohuntas of Sitakund. On the left, after passing Sambhunáth, is ■ sacred spring with *pucca* sides called *Gyákunda*,—which is considered equal in merit to the famous shrine at Gaya,—where the pilgrim shaves and bathes, and offers oblations to the manes of his ancestors. Proceeding upwards, the path becomes a mere track, with no attempt at being ■ regular road such as leads up to Sambhunath. We now come to the base of mount *Chandrasekhara*. The grand staircase—consisting of about 575 steps, and generally supposed to have been built by one of the kings of Tipperah,—which brings the pilgrim to the temple of *Chandranáth* at the top of the Chandrasekhara hill, is giving way a little here and there; and unless repaired in time, will render the ascent more difficult in future than in the days before their construction. Chandrasekhara\* is the highest peak in Chittagong, being 1155 feet in height, and is situate in the centre of the Sitakund range which, commencing from the

■ *Chandranáth* is the name of the god. The peak is called Chandrasekhara. It is also sometimes called Chaudranáth. Dr. Hunter also calls it Chandinath. Although Chandinath is another name of Siva, I have never heard the hill called by that name. It is, however, usual to ■ Chandranath and Sitakund as synonymous terms.

northern end of the Sudder station of the district, runs without interruption to Tipperah, parallel to the Grand Trunk Road. In the *Nirvána-tantra\** it is mentioned ■ one of the *Kulaparvatas* or principal mountains of India. Wilson in his Dictionary erroneously places it in Arracan. "In the hill of Sitakund there is ■ stone of two descriptions, one apparently of volcanic formation, and porous, the other solid containing iron." The hill is "formed of ■ stratum inclined at an angle of 30° north-east and south-west, of hard clay in places; and in others of sandstone. The surface is generally covered with loam, but on the southern slopes of all the outskirting hills, it is red sandstone or sand.†" The original temple on this peak, built by a king of Tipperah, fell down in the cyclone of 1848, when the present structure, which is of smaller dimensions, was erected by Ram Sundar Sen, a rich merchant, who has since fallen from his high estate. The temple has little pretensions to artistic beauty. But the view around the peak was exceedingly beautiful. A ship that was sailing far off in the Bay of Bengal, appeared like ■ bird slowly flying on the horizon. The

\* नौलाचलं मन्दरसं पर्वतं चन्द्रशेखरम् ।  
चिमालयं सुवेलसं मलयं भस्त्रपर्वतम् ।  
चतुष्कोणे वसेदेवि रतत् सप्तकुलाचलम् ॥  
इति निर्बाणतन्त्रे सर्वतन्त्रोऽन्तमोऽन्तमे हरवौरी-  
संवादे योगविवरणं नाम चतुर्थः ॥

† Statistics of the Lower Provinces of Bengal for 1863-69, p. 25.

ascent of the hill itself, it is said, gives salvation.\* The god, however, is an ordinary linga. Sitakund was, as stated before, visited by Sir Joseph Hooker. The following is an extract from the account given by him in page 352 of Vol. II of his Himalayan Journals :— “The road to the top of Seetakund leads along ■ most beautiful valley, and then winds up a cliff that is in many places almost precipitous, the ascent being partly by steps cut in the rock of which there are 560 (?). The mountain is very sacred, and there is a large Brahmin temple on its flank; and near the base a perpetual flame bursts out of the rock. This we were anxious to examine, and were extremely disappointed to find it a small vertical hole in a slaty rock, with a lateral one below for a draught, and that it is daily supplied by pious pilgrims and Brahmins with such enormous quantities of ghee (liquid butter), that it is to all intents and purposes an artificial lamp; no trace of natural phenomena being discoverable.” I do not know to what flame Dr. Hooker thus alludes. Jyotirmaya is at the foot of the hill, and is also visited by pious pilgrims. But there can be no doubt that it is a natural phenomenon.

In order to visit *Virupáksha*, ■ phallic symbol of

■ श्रीचक्रशेषरारोहे मुङ्गिमांग्रेणि सानवः ॥  
इति श्रीवाराहौतन्त्रे नारायणौनारायणसंवादे  
चन्द्रशेषरवर्णना नाम षष्ठः पट्टः ।

Siva (similar to Chandranath and Sambhunath, mentioned above), in a temple situated midway down the descent from Chandrasekhara, the pilgrim descends by a north-east route. Many proceed to Chandranath after visiting Virupáksha. The ascent to this temple from the foot of the mountain is not a pleasant affair. Sometimes you have to take a long leap, holding in your hand the frail root of an old tree. If it gives way, you are at once precipitated into the abyss below, which seems unfathomable. On his way to Chandranath from Virupaksha, the pilgrim visits *Unakoti Sivalinga* in a picturesque spot called *Pátála Puri*, or the nether world, covered with green foliage, and full of the beauties of nature. The undulations in the rocky surface of the cave, drenched with water issuing from the sides of it, are pointed out as Unakotí or 99 lacs of Sivas. What Mr. Sherring said of its prototype in Benares applies to this: "The actual number cut out on the superficies of the stone is not more than a few hundred; but the Hindus are not particular in their definition of numbers."\* Descending from Virupáksha, we meet the former road again at the *Mandákiní*. This stream is considered to be identical with the river in heaven of the same name. It is said that the Ganges on starting from the Himálaya divided itself into three streams, one running through heaven called *Mandákiní*, another

\* Sherring's Sacred City of the Hindoos, p. 100.

flowing on earth called Gangá, and the third Bhogavati, which is in the nether world. The water of the stream is certainly very clear, cool, and sweet.

Of the other shrines, Bárabakunda is a volcanic well. It is about three miles' journey southwards from the Sitakund village, and is situated in the same range of hills. Báraba fire, according to ancient mythology,\* originated from the anger of the Muni Aurva, whose mother's womb was about to be ripped open by the Kshatriyas. It was deposited in the bed of the sea, to prevent it from burning the three worlds. It is stated in the *Varahi Tantra* that Baraba is the veritable fire which sprang from the third eye of Siva and destroyed Káma, and that it is to burn down the three worlds at the final annihilation. The same Tantra also relates that the spring is four cubits square, with tepid water, and that at the

\* ततसं क्रोधसङ्कातं चौर्बोऽग्नि वदणालये ।  
उत्सर्जा स चैवाप उपयुक्ते महोदधौ ॥ ११ ॥  
महयशिरो भूला यजद्देवविदा विदुः ।  
समग्निमुक्तिरहक्षात् पितृत्याप्नो महोदधौ ॥ ११ ॥  
इति श्रीभद्राभारते चादिपर्वति चैवरथपर्वतौ-  
र्णेपाख्यानेऽशैत्यधिकश्ततमोऽध्यायः ।

इथग्निरः = वड्वामुखम् । इति भारतभाषदीपाख्यभारतटीकाद्यां वौक्षक्षः ।

† योगनेचाकासङ्कातो अलमध्ये च दुर्वहः ।  
कामो भूला च संचोतो येन नेनाग्निना पुरा ॥  
चिलोकं दद्धते येन समुद्रसैव द्वाष्टते ।  
यमानो दद्धते तेन त्रिलोकं सचराचरम् ॥  
वाराञ्छाम् सप्तमः पठः ।

fire consists of seven flames.\* The following count of the spring is given by Lord Teignmouth:† “The burning well is situated about twenty-two miles from Chatigan, at the termination of a valley surrounded by hills. I visited it in 1778, and, from recollection, am enabled to give the following account of it:—the shape of the well, or rather reservoir, is oblong, about six feet by four, and the depth does not exceed twelve feet. The water, which is always cold, is supplied by a spring, and there is a conduit for carrying off the superfluity; a part of the surface of the well, about a fourth, is covered with brick-work, which is nearly ignited by the flames, which flash without intermission from the surface of the water. It would appear that inflammable vapour escapes through the water, which takes fire on contact with the external air; the perpetuity of the flame is occasioned by the ignited brick-work as, without this, much of the vapour would escape without conflagration. This was proved by taking away the covering of brick-work after the extinction of the heat, by throwing upon it the water of

■ ■ ददिष्वते देवि कुरुं वाङ्मयसंज्ञकम् ।  
क्रोम्मान्ते विद्युते कुरुं चतुर्हस्तं सुग्रोभनम् ॥  
सप्तशिखाकांका वक्तिः मुक्तिकेशरसंज्ञिधौ ।  
मध्यस्थीष्टदुष्कृत तचाधिः शिवरूपिणः (?) ॥

वाराहाम् ■■■ पठसुः ।

\* Lord Teignmouth's Memoirs of Sir William Jones, p. 55.

the well. The flames still continued to burst forth from the surface, but with momentary intermissions and the vapour was always immediately kindled by holding ■ candle at ■ small distance from the surface of the water. A piece of silver placed in the conduit for carrying off the superfluous water, was discoloured in ■ few minutes, and ■ infusion of tea gave ■ dark tinge to the water."

Compare with the above, Captain Pogson's description of the spring—"In front is ■ building about thirty feet square, over the spring; the descent to it, by a flight of steps, is about fifteen feet; the rising heat was like that of a hot bath. Flames, in successive flashes, were playing on the surface of the water, which, from a column of perpetually rising bubbles, appeared to be boiling. The air they contained, ignited as it came in contact with an oven-like furnace, which the flames fed, and rendered, ■ one side red-hot. The heat of this self-ignited furnace rendered the surface of the water tepid, but it is naturally cold. In order to condense, and thereby perpetuate, the flames, about one-half of the spring is built over, with an aperture in the centre of the arch, through which, looking from the terrace above, the flames are seen playing ■ the water. Persons bathing, took in their hands and on their clothes the water with the flame burning on it. The uncovered part is a square of less than five feet, and the covered part about the same di-

mensions. The water is brackish, sulphureous, and chalybeate. A servant drank ■ much of it as he could hold in both hands united, twice filled, and ■ so severely purged, that he remained behind, and laid down until its effects went off ..... The water of the Balwa koond has an exhilarating effect, occasions ■ slight headache, and a sensation of fulness, which soon go off. Its effects ■ diuretic, slightly aperient, and creative of hunger.”\*

The well outside the Kunda, formed by water issuing from the spring, is called *Básikunda*. Here the devotee first bathes and purifies himself. He then bathes in the Bárabakunda itself inside, and offers *bel* leaves and flowers to the flames to appease the burning god. It is said that at each offer of the *bel* leaves and flowers, the god roars louder to express his satisfaction. Close by are *Dadhibhairava*; the temple of *Jvalakáli*; and the spring of *Kumári*.

At ■ nearly similar distance and similarly situated is *Lavanákhya*, the Nuolukka of Captain Pogson and the Naldala Khya of Statistical Report of 1868-9, which differs from Barabakunda in the weakness of its flame and in the increased saltiness of its water. The salt-water is used for cooking purposes, though it is said that the salt cannot be eliminated from the water. A tradition prevails that this was tested

\* Captain Pogson's Narrative during ■ Tour to Chateegaon, p. 203.

by Mr. Harvey\* when he was Collector of Chittagong, and that he accordingly discharged some persons arrested for illicit manufacture of salt. The water, it is said, cures goitre. Around Lavanákhya are the following: *Dadhikunda*, a small well fed by the stream issuing from Lavanákhya; *Gurudhvani*, another Jyotirmaya; *Brahma Kunda*, a hot spring on the top of a small hill, east of Lavanákhya; *Suryakunda*, a phenomenon similar to Lavanákhya and Bárabakunda.† Near Lavanákhya a place is shown as where the right arm of Sati, the consort of Siva, fell, cut by the discus of Vishnu. But no idol is seen there, and it is not held in the same veneration as Kálighat, Kámakhya, and similar places.

Dr. Oldham thus epitomizes Captain Pogson: "There are seven other springs within a circle of

\* Mr. John Inglis Harvey was Collector of Chittagong from 1831 to 1837, with short intermissions, during which he acted as Commissioner of the Division. *Vide* Mr. Cotton's Memorandum on the Revenue History of Chittagong, pp. 118-121.

† There are Mohuntas at the temple of Sambhunath, Bárabakunda, and Lavanákhya. Of these, the Mohunta of Sambhunath is the richest and the most well-known. He is generally called the Mohunta of Sitakund. The present Mohunta of Sitakund, whose name is Kis, or Ban, is a young gentleman of excellent manners, and of good education. He is also the Mohunta of Adinath, in the island of Moiscal. Of this god the same story is told as of that at Vaidyanath, near Deoghar. The Mohuntas have to take a vow of celibacy, and are succeeded by their principal disciples.

six miles, called Nuolukka (Lavanákhya), Kooaree (Kumári Kund), Dadhee (Dadhi), Burma (Brahma), Suruj (Súrya), Chandur (Chandra), and Seeta (Síta). Nuolukka is warm, vapour ignites on the application of flame, saline; Kooaree is hot, saline, sulphureous, and chalybeate; vapour ignites. Dadhee, water is cold, salt. Burma (Brahma?) very hot and saltish, slightly chalybeate, vapour ignites. Chandur or Chander is on a hill, salt and exceedingly hot ('said to have appeared within the last four months') ignites; Seeta is pure and limpid.\*"

From Lavanákhya the pilgrim proceeds to *Sahasradhárá*, a cataract. The water falls beautifully in thin streams, so as to form a natural shower-bath, from a height of about 400 feet. This is by far the most picturesque and romantic of all the various and wonderful sights of Sitakund. It is customary for pilgrims to stand under it. The water of *Sahasradhárá* is considered to be Siva himself. One cannot forget the bath at *Sahasradhárá*. It is said, that on the words "bom bom," which are peculiar to Siva, being pronounced, the water falls with gradually increasing force.

The places noted before are those generally visited by pilgrims. There are many others, for the *locale* of which the curious and the religious will refer to the *Váráhí Tantra*, the Bradshaw of the shrines of

\* Memoirs of the Geological Survey of India, Vol. XIX, Part II, p. 59.

Sitakund. •From what has been said above, the reader who has had patience to follow us to the end of this book, will, it is trusted, be convinced of the recent character of these shrines. There is a sustained effort to plant on this place all the *tirthas* which are held in esteem by the Hindoos. For the most famous shrines of Benares, of Gaya, of Brindavan, of Puri, and other places, miniature *tirthas* are pointed out in Sitakund.\* The remarkable phenomena which nature presents in the place, have aided the fabrication of superstitious interpolations and forgeries. The sacred writings, which have been quoted before, bear evident indications of the alternate supremacy of the Sivaites and the Vishnuvites, and of the gradual multiplication of the shrines esteemed by each sect. But the belief in their sacredness is firm, deep-rooted, and universal. A man who holds a different opinion, is looked upon as irreligious and sacrilegious, even in Chittagong, where Hindooism is at a discount. Whether on account of their recent establishment, or from any other cause, the shrines have not received attention at the hands of the antiquarian and the sci-

\* There seems to be no end of places called Sitakund. In p. 23 ante and footnote, it has already been stated that there are three more Sitakunds, besides the Sitakund in Chittagong, viz., those at Monghyr, Kelat, and Ceylon. In pages 22 and 35 of Vol. XVI of Cunningham's Archaeological Report, there is mention of another Sitakund situate on the River Gandak in Tirhut.

tist. In these pages they have been described by a layman. But the antiquarian and the scientist will be able to ascertain the time when these shrines were first established, and how they gradually expanded. They will be able to ascertain the effect of the waters of the several springs, and analyze the medicinal virtues, which they are believed to possess. They will be able to ascertain the extent of the Hindoo occupation of the district, and of its conquest by the king of Tipperah. They will, in short, be able to complete the ancient history of Chittagong, which is now so meagre and unsatisfactory.

